

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

June 4, 1956

TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES Representative,
McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

SUBJECT: Over-all Survey of Bracero-Community Activities

1. Mr. Roy Haynes was given the note and an explanation of the assignment you gave me.
2. Information on central housing units now in operation were checked and the USES Representatives in the McAllen Office were contacted for whatever information they could supply.
3. Appointments were made by telephone with Mr. Hugh Cupps and with Father F. A. Kilday for Friday, as they had previous appointments for Thursday (May 31, 1956).
4. On Friday morning (June 1, 1956) Mr. Cupps was given an explanation of the purposes of the plan to arrange facilities whereby religious services of the worker's choice could be held at the central housing units of the associations having such units. Mr. Cupps accepted the explanation and offered his cooperation and whatever facilities were required. He requested time be given to discuss this program with Mr. W. Wallace, President of the Valley Farmers Cooperative Association. It was also agreed at this first meeting that if necessary I would go talk to Mr. Wallace to personally explain our plan and program.
5. On Friday afternoon an interview was held with Father F. A. Kilday and the Assistant Pastor of the Saint Joan of Arc Church at Weslaco. The letter from Bishop Garriga had been received and the two priests were willing to cooperate and explained what work they had already done.
6. Father Kilday stated that Masses had been said at the Weslaco Labor Camp last year and attendance was satisfactory. In the coming season the plan outlined by Father Kilday calls for rosary services on Wednesday evening (8:30 PM) and Masses will be said as soon as a large number of men are brought in. Meanwhile signs giving directions to the Saint Joan of Arc Church will be placed at vantage points inviting the Braceros in the vicinity to attend services. About the end of June a Mexican Priest from San Luis Potosi is to report for duty at Weslaco and he should be able to take charge of services for the Braceros.

Father Kilday accepted the suggestion of the distribution of literature among the men throughout the time they are here. However, he plans to write Rev. W. D. O'Connor, Executive Secretary of the Bishops' Committee,

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to find out what financial aid can be given the small parishes in taking care of the influx of several thousand men for the cotton picking season. He will report to me what can be done from this angle.

Good cooperation has been received and the exchange of information on whatever may help this plan and program has been promised from both Mr. Cupps and Father Kilday.

7. It will be necessary to obtain a listing of the parishes of this diocese in order to be able to contact the priest responsible in each area. In this manner the number of central housing units and the available number of priests for services can be properly arranged. This information will be obtained next week.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

June 7, 1956

TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative

SUBJECT: Over-all Survey of Bracero Community Activities

1. In an interview with Father James Patrick Delaney June 6, 1956, Pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Mission, Texas, the suggestion was made that local men's church organizations, such as the Holy Name Society, Knights of Columbus, and Catholic Action, be brought into the plan to make religious facilities available to contracted Mexican Nationals who profess the Catholic faith.

In order to check on the value of this suggestion I discussed the plan with the President of Catholic Action, Mr. Ramon de la Garza, Mission, Texas. Mr. de la Garza was immediately interested and felt that much could be accomplished by individual members of his organization because it would be not only "humanitarian" but an obligation and a duty.

No commitments were made to Father Delaney or to Mr. de la Garza awaiting instructions from your office.

2. Some of the advantages possible under this suggestion are:
 - a. Many Mexican Nationals could be contacted and brought into participation in this program by the individual efforts of any lay church organization that could not otherwise be reached through work with Central Housing Units. According to the latest report available, May 24, 1956, in this office, the number of Mexican Nationals in each agricultural area and ceiling for each area indicates that 28,224 of these workers are now in the Rio Grande Valley Area, Texas Code 8-44-01. Approximately some 1,500 Mexican Nationals are being housed in Central Housing Units, the remainder are housed by individual employers either at their farm or in towns close to them and in small numbers. It is among these scattered workers that the effort of the lay organizations could be utilized.
 - b. The limited number of priests in each parish does not permit much opportunity for the priests to do this type of work without additional priests or the assistance from such lay organizations.
 - c. Participation of Spanish-speaking citizens in this program would tend to eliminate whatever ill-feeling, resentment or misunderstanding exists in this area.
 - d. The participation of the Spanish-speaking citizens would not be limited to the cotton picking season.

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3. If the groups described above, in the parishes where they show an interest in the plan, a meeting could be arranged for a full explanation of the whole program. The individual groups, in each parish, would also be advised that further suggestions, information or participation from the U. S. Department of Labor would be carried out through their local pastor, thereby eliminating the possibility of becoming involved in purely local issues and would reduce the number of persons to deal with to a minimum. Spot checks on the results being obtained and methods being used could be made and instructions or suggestions made through the pastors.
4. All efforts would be made to avoid arousing the criticism or opposition of any and all other religious groups interested in carrying out activities, of whatever nature, among the contracted Mexican Nationals.
5. This report is respectfully submitted for your consideration and evaluation. Ideas and suggestions brought to my attention and made for the purpose of making this program a success will be brought to your attention for your comments and instructions.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

June 11, 1956

TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

SUBJECT: Weekly Report on Survey of Bracero Community Activities.

1. During the week, June 4-8, 1956, six parishes were visited:

a. Edinburg - Father E. B. Postert, Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, together with his two assistants, were interviewed and a general discussion developed on the Bracero Program, in particular the plan now in the process of being developed of bringing religious services to the contracted Mexican Nationals living in central housing units. These priests held services for braceros at the West Side Labor Camp last year and report satisfactory attendance. Father Postert reports that during the cotton picking season several braceros came to his office to ask what was going to be done about having religious services for them. At that time they had no plan to work on and the men were encouraged to attend services in town. At the present there are no central housing units with men in this parish, but plans were made to arrange services, if the men so desired, as soon as the workers begin to arrive. This is a large parish and the braceros living in town are welcomed at regular services, according to Father Postert, and those who desire to have services at their camp will be tended to as soon as the information and consent of the owners is obtained and the men express willingness to have these services.

b. Elsa-Edcouch - The pastor was out of town (Father Edward Blown) and Father Bernard Berbrugge, the Assistant Pastor, was given the explanation of our program. Due to previous arrangement and schedules the evening services for the one housing unit in the parish that now has men (Valley Farmers Cooperative Harvesting Association) will not begin until June 20, 1956. Meanwhile the workers will be contacted as the permission of the owners has already been obtained.

c. San Juan - Father Fortunato Herrero, Spanish Missionary temporarily in charge at Our Lady of San Juan Church, reported that he and his assistant are already contacting the contracted Mexican Nationals living in the town of San Juan. Since the work is just beginning he was not in a position to give results. Father Herrero expressed satisfaction that such a plan is being tried out, stating that he thought this program is "concrete and effective" (concreto y eficaz) and that he would give all the cooperation necessary.

d. Pharr - Father Joseph Lyons has no assistant and although his is not a large parish in territory he has a large number of members. He expressed a keen interest in the plan presented to him under this program. During our conversation Father Lyons wanted to know why an

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interest was taken in the bracero to the detriment of the local Spanish speaking citizen. After an explanation of the bracero program Father Lyons stated that there are always two sides to a problem and he was not too familiar with the prerequisites of the Bracero Program. Visits to central housing units could and would be made when the arrangements were complete for his participation and he also suggested that he could hold special services for the braceros living within the city limits of Pharr. Father Lyons expressed the opinion that a large attendance of braceros to the regular services might have an effect upon the regular congregation although he is aware that a few braceros are now attending such services.

e. McAllen - The three priests at the Sacred Heart Church, most of the members of this congregation are Spanish speaking, were immediately interested in our plan and promised to cooperate in whatever way they could. One of the priests, Father Pascual Lanese, showed particular interest because he is now giving services at the Concentration Camp for "Wetbacks" operated by the U. S. Immigration Service on the outskirts of McAllen. The priest has also been contacted by a local lawyer (Mr. Robert Sanchez, prominent in G. I. Forum affairs) to take an interest in their effort of reducing the number of braceros that are permitted to enter the United States. Father Lanese was given a detailed account of the purposes in permitting the entry of braceros and the conditions under which they enter. He expressed his thanks for the information that, up to then, he did not have.

f. Mission - Father James Patrick Delaney was readily interested in the program and he suggested that it could be made to serve two purposes, i.e. the bringing of religious services to the contracted Mexican Nationals and the arousing of the civic and religious interest of the local Spanish-speaking citizens who are members of his church. His plan calls for the participation of men's church organizations to contact the braceros living within the limits of the city of Mission. The first services to be held under this program will be held in this parish because the number of men involved is greater and arrangements were possible at once.

All the priests who have been interviewed and familiarized with the plan to hold religious services at the central housing units have been informed that they are not to participate in the taking of complaints of any nature although any flagrant violation can be reported to the U. S. Department of Labor offices at McAllen, otherwise they are to refer the worker to the proper authorities and to go through the proper channels. All of the priests have stated that they have too much other work to permit themselves to become involved in more and that they will only concern themselves with religious and moral issues. It has been explained to these priests that although they have been contacted primarily it has only been because of the knowledge that the religious preference of the majority of the braceros is known to be Roman Catholic, that wherever and whenever workers are found who express a preference for religious services of any other church they will be given the same opportunity and facilities. This idea and plan has met with the complete approval of all the priests.

The outstanding fact discovered so far, in the preliminary work to organize these religious services at central housing units, has been that the majority of the priests interviewed are very uninformed on the Migrant Labor Agreement and the Work Contract. In a couple of instances the opinion has been expressed

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that the bracero is protected to the detriment of the local Spanish speaking citizens. The explanation that has been given them, in the course of our interview, is accepted and a copy of the booklet, "Information Concerning Entry of Mexican Agricultural Workers into the United States - Public Law 78, 89th Congress, as amended," dated February 1956, is left for each priest so that they can better understand the program and the reasons for the presence of the contracted Mexican National in the United States.

All priests contacted have received a letter from Bishop Garriga's office, at Corpus Christi, advising them that a representative of the U. S. Labor Department would call on them and explain a program pertaining to the bracero program and the holding of religious services for these braceros.

2. The owners of central housing units and/or managers who have been contacted and to whom an explanation has been given of the plan now being developed have been courteous and cooperative. All have expressed the opinion that such a plan is very good and they are willing to try to make it a success by extending all the cooperation and facilities at their command.

Mr. W. Wallace was interviewed, after I had first contacted and discussed the plan with Mr. Hugh Cupps, and he gave his consent so that religious services can be held at his camp. He is ready to make whatever is necessary to arrange a proper place for such services.

Mr. Fred Braunig, manager of the West Side Farm Labor Association, was contacted and given an explanation of our plan and his consent and cooperation requested. Mr. Braunig gave his approval but stated that his lease had a clause in which the owner of the property, Mr. Bruce Adkins, would have to approve the religious services to be held at this central housing unit. Mr. Adkins' approval has not been obtained because no contact has been possible with him to explain our plan and to obtain his consent.

Mr. Olin Akin, of Akin Products Co., Mission, Texas, accepted the request for permission to hold religious services at two housing units where he houses contracted Mexican Nationals. Mr. Akins directed me to his camp manager, Mr. Nieves Garcia, so that I could tell him what was necessary to hold such services at these two camps. An inspection was made of the two camps and a meeting arranged so that I could talk to the workers, explain our plan and obtain their approval to have religious services at each camp. Before the meeting was held with the workers I called Mr. J. H. Snider, Field Manager for Akin Products Co., to advise him that I had Mr. Akin's permission to talk to the workers and had made arrangements to hold meetings with the workers. Mr. Snider had not been contacted originally and it was thought necessary to let him know that we would like to have the cooperation of all persons involved, and this included the Field Manager for this concern.

Mr. E. W. Kinsey, manager of the Mission Farmers Cooperative Harvesting Society, Mission, Texas, was contacted here in the office of the U. S. Labor

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Department. Our plan and program was discussed at length with Mr. Kinsey and he stated that it is a good idea and that he would cooperate in whatever manner he could. Mr. Kinsey further stated that at the present he did not have workers at his central housing unit but would advise me as soon as they started arriving.

3. Two meetings were held during the week with the workers to explain what was to be done about bringing religious services to them. The two meetings were at central housing units used by the Akin Products Co. to house contracted Mexican Nationals. At the 3-Mile Gin unit the men were called together by Mr. Nieves Garcia, Camp Manager, and I introduced myself. An explanation was given the men of Article 23 of the Work Contract, as amended, and then the purpose of my visit. After finding out that all of the men present professed to be Roman Catholic I told them that they could have a priest come out to hold services for them. All the men accepted the offer and as the meeting was brought to an end a round of applause was given in appreciation of the facilities being offered them.

At the Akin Products Co. camp on Highway 83 the men also received the plan with interest. There are about 200 workers at this camp and all profess to be Roman Catholic. One of the workers even suggested that on the day the priest was to come out that I should arrange to have the trucker bring them in a half hour earlier. I did not accept this suggestion and explained to the workers that under no circumstances could we expose ourselves to the criticism that even one individual would be forced to leave his work for the purpose of attending religious services, rather that we could arrange to have the priest go out half an hour later, if necessary. Father Delaney, in whose parish these two camps are located, was notified as to the result of the two meetings and the date and hour set was agreeable. These services will be held at the 3-Mile Gin on Tuesday night at 8:30 PM and at the Akin Camp on Highway 83 on Wednesday night at 8:30 PM.

These two services will give me the opportunity to see how effective our plan is and how to organize and plan the services for the future and to study the reaction of the workers at these services. Close contact will be maintained with the supervisory personnel of these camps to be informed as to their progress.

4. The interest and cooperation of the USES Representatives in this Area have been a decided factor in the success that is expected from this program. Each representative has been given an explanation of the plan and the purpose behind it. All approve and have given me the information at their command in regard to the proper persons to see and keep me informed of new places where workers are coming in.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

June 20, 1956

TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

Subject: Weekly Report on Survey of Bracero Community Activities

Monday - June 11. The Central Housing Unit operated by the Hidalgo Gin (Southwest Farmers Co-op Society) was found to be housing men contracted to the St. Clair Food Co., and to the L. H. Moore Canning Co., both of McAllen, Texas. Contact was first made with the Hidalgo Gin Co. to obtain permission to hold religious services on their property. The St. Clair Food Company and the L. H. Moore Canning Company, after a complete explanation of our plan and program, readily approved and gave their consent to having a meeting with the Mexican Nationals now contracted to them and living at the Southwest Farm Co-op Society Camp south of Mission, Texas.

Mr. C. O. Hagen and Mr. Paul Jackson were contacted about the availability of their Bracero Camps for holding religious services. Both men stated that this plan would be beneficial not only to the workers but to the individual employers and approval was given at once to cover all the camps they will operate during the cotton picking season for 1956. A letter was written to Mr. M. L. Worley, who will be in charge of these camps, to the effect that he cooperate and provide the facilities for the holding of religious services.

Father F. A. Kilday was contacted to report to him that permission had been obtained to contact the workers at the Weslaco Bracero Center. Father Kilday reported that services were already being held at the Weslaco Labor Camp. A small cabin has been provided for Catholic services and a Baptist church holds services for its members. Catholic services were being held at 10:00 A.M. but the men requested earlier services so they could attend in larger numbers and at the same time not be deprived of work opportunities. A compromise was reached and Mass is said at 6:00 A.M. on Sundays. Good attendance is reported.

Mr. Hugh Cupps was contacted so that a meeting could be held with the workers now living at the Valley Farmers Co-op. Harvesting Society to find out their religious affiliation and to determine if they were willing to have religious services at their camp. At 7:30 P.M. the meeting with these men was held with Mr. Cupps, Mr. W. Wallace, Sr. and Mr. W. Wallace, Jr. present. The men professed to be Catholic and were agreeable to the idea of having a priest come to this camp for religious services. Special emphasis is given to the explanation made to the men about the religious liberty we enjoy in this country and to the privilege and responsibility placed on all individuals so that respect and tolerance may prevail. The workers who are not Catholics are invited to contact me personally to specify their religious preference. This invitation is thought not only proper but necessary because they might feel in a minority and may hesitate to express their

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preference in the presence of a majority who profess a religion different to theirs. No one has accepted this invitation and it does not necessarily mean that there are no Protestants among such large groups.

Tuesday - June 12: Mr. W. L. Worley was contacted for information about his camps and as to when the workers are expected. Mr. Worley stated that he had been thinking of a plan to invite one priest and one minister to go to these camps for services; to limit the number of services to two per week; to keep out all others interested in the religious welfare of the men at these camps. Our plan was explained to Mr. Worley and he agreed that it was preferable to work on a voluntary basis, particularly as it applied to the preference of the workers themselves.

The Southwest Farmers Co-op. Society Camp at Mission was visited so that the workers could be given an explanation of our program and to ascertain whether it was acceptable to them to have religious services at their camp. Due to the fact that the tomato season is about over and to the fact that there are men contracted to more than one concern there was no one person in charge of the camp as a whole. The men were called to a meeting and they also professed to be Catholics and were glad to have religious services at their camp. Friday, June 15, at 8:30 P.M. was agreed as the date for these services to be held.

The first religious services were held at the Three Mile Gin, north of Mission, at 8:00 P.M. About 60 of the 75 workers housed at this Central Housing Unit attended the Rosary services. Mr. Nieves Garcia, Camp Manager, was present and cooperated in every manner possible. The priest, Father James Patrick Delaney, was received with courtesy and a great deal of respect by the workers. After the rosary was recited Father Delaney spoke to the men in Spanish, creditably, and expressed his thanks in being permitted to come out to them and extended a cordial welcome to all the braceros to attend services in the Mission church. In the course of his short talk he stressed upon the men the idea of avoiding all forms and types of vices and counseled them to avoid going to Reynosa in line with his counsel. Further on he called the attention of the men to their behavior, to maintain high standards in their daily life in camp and in their work. Mr. Ramon de la Garza, President of the Catholic Action Society, accompanied Father Delaney and he, as a parishioner, also extended an invitation to the men to attend services in town on Sunday. Mr. de la Garza promised that he and the members of his society would make every effort to help the braceros in their personal problems when in Mission. He called upon the braceros to behave themselves as a favor to the Spanish-speaking citizens, explaining that whenever a bracero misbehaved the blame would reflect upon all Spanish speaking citizens and on the other hand if they behaved all would benefit as a result. Both talks were received politely and the workers seemed to appreciate the effort being made to bring them the services of their faith.

Wednesday - June 13: Father Edward Blown, Edcouch, was contacted to fix the date definitely for June 20, 8:30 P.M., for the service at the Valley Farmers Co-op. Harvesting Society.

On contacting Mr. Fred Braunig, West Side Farm Labor Ass'n., he had explained that he approved our plan of arranging for religious services at his camp but that, due to a clause included in his lease, the approval of Mr. Bruce Adkins, owner of the property where the housing unit is located, was necessary before religious services could be held. I finally discussed the matter

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with Mr. Adkins and he explained that his son is a minister and that he would take charge of the religious matter upon his return from north Texas. The minister is to return to Pharr next week at which time I plan to discuss the program with him. This particular interview was necessary on account of the clause in the lease between Mr. Braunig and Mr. Adkins. The result of my conversation will be checked immediately with Mr. Shock and the Regional Office will be notified, particularly if no agreement is reached.

The second religious service was held at the Akin Products Company Camp, two miles west of Mission on Highway 83, at 8:30 P.M. Approximately 140 men attended the services. Very few workers were seen in the camp area during the services and no contact was made with those not attending so that they would not feel that pressure was being used to make them attend. Everything went along smoothly and the priest remained in the area about twenty minutes visiting with the men after the service.

No permanent altars have been fixed because I thought it proper to have the priest become acquainted with the camps and to permit him to give us his idea on where and how to fix up these altars. Some of the camps do not have day rooms and due to the weather it is thought advisable to hold services in the open. This particular method permits more comfort for all concerned and a wider area for greater attendance. The priest has taken into consideration that the men might be tired and tells them to sit or stand instead of kneeling throughout the service. These two services have demonstrated that the priests are being very considerate and are glad to go out to hold these services; the men are demonstrating their appreciation by their attendance.

Thursday - June 14: The TEC office at Edinburg was visited to check the list of associations certified from that office and to gather information they might have about central housing units in their area. The Valley Acres Farmers Co-op. Society was contacted. This Association is now building a housing unit to house 250 workers, 350 other workers contracted to this Association will be housed at the Weslaco Bracero Center. Mr. E. Elliot, manager of the Valley Acres Farmers Society, approved the plan and consent was given to contact the workers at both places to get their approval to the holding of religious services at the two housing units.

Mr. R. B. James, East La Villa Farmers Co-op. Society, stated that they did not have central housing but might get some later. He further stated that at any time that I wanted to consult with the workers on this program I was free to do so. At the La Villa Co-op. Harvesting Association Mr. James T. Pealer, manager, reported that a Spanish-speaking missionary had given services last year. He approved the holding of services on a voluntary basis at both housing units used by this association to house 600 men as soon as the workers come in.

A visit was made to the Weslaco Labor Camp and information gathered about religious services. The Baptist church has a building on the grounds and facilities have been extended to the Catholic priest from Weslaco to hold services on Sunday morning. There will be 1,600 to 1,800 workers at this camp. A check will be made to see what services are being held and the

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attendance of the workers.

There are no workers now at the Weslaco Bracero Center (American Empire Camp) but permission has been obtained to contact the workers as soon as they arrive. Father Hugo Banden Bussche has already held services and reports good attendance. Contact will be made with the new men upon arrival and then Father Banden Bussche can continue with his services, if the men so desire.

Friday - June 15: A visit was made to the Hidalgo Contracting Center to check whether a file or list was kept on Associations and individual farmers requesting large numbers of braceros for contracting for the coming cotton season. No such lists are kept but Mr. Scannell promised to keep such information in the future. The contracting of Mexican Nationals and arrival at the various Central Housing Centers is checked through the Contracting Manifests (ES346) received at the McAllen Area office of the U.S. Department of Labor and by daily check on the list of new associations being approved by the Regional Office. It is necessary to have much of the information about the location of the camp in regard to the TEC area as well as the limits of the local parishes to know who to contact in making arrangements for the religious services to be held at the individual camps.

Services were held at the Southwest Farmers Co-op. Camp with over 175 men present. A temporary altar was fixed and the service was carried out smoothly. In the presence of the priest I have given a second talk on the freedom of religion and on the right of all present either to attend or not to attend the religious services to be held at their camps. Their respect for the priest is called to their attention and they are told that the same respect must be shown for clergymen of any religion when they come out to hold services, even though they may not be taking part in the services. I hope that by giving them such a talk in the presence of their priest I can impress upon them respect and tolerance.

General: All contacts with employers, camp managers and workers have been agreeable. All have approved the program and are giving all necessary cooperation. Many of the employers have stated that they have had a desire to provide such facilities for their men but had not taken the necessary steps to carry out a definite plan. The participation of the U. S. Department of Labor in bringing together the interested parties so that they can provide religious services to contracted Mexican Nationals aids in solving a problem that has existed in this region and the program now under way promises to be a benefit to all parties concerned.

The workers contacted to date have given definite approval to the offer to have religious services at their camps. At three services held at camps housing 525 workers the attendance of 350 men at these services demonstrates that the workers are receptive and appreciative of the effort being made to bring this facility to them. Priests contacted have all reported that many of the braceros are attending services in the towns close to their camps.

Pictures have been taken at these services and this report has been delayed

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in order that the pictures might be included with the report. Any suggestion on the types of pictures that are desired will be appreciated.

The TEC Areas of McAllen, Edinburg and Weslaco will be completely covered by Monday (June 18th) and Raymondville, Harlingen and Brownsville will be worked the rest of the week.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

June 27, 1956

TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

SUBJECT: Weekly Report on Survey of Bracero Community Activities.

June 17 - On this date I arrived at the Weslaco Labor Camp at 5:30 A.M. to attend religious services being held by Father Hugo Banden Bussche, Weslaco, for the contracted Mexican Nationals living at this Camp. About fifty men were already waiting for 6:00 o'clock services to begin. These services were formerly held by Father Banden Bussche at 11:00 A.M. on Sundays and were changed to 6:00 A.M. at the request of the workers who wanted to be able to attend Sunday services and then have the opportunity to work, when work is offered them on Sunday. Father Banden Bussche readily agreed to the change and he reports good attendance. Over one hundred workers were in attendance today, including some of the Spanish-speaking citizens who live at this Labor Camp.

Several of the workers received Communion but I did not take pictures of this because I had previously talked to the workers and since they were not informed about the purpose of my visit and picture taking I did not want to arouse their resentment unnecessarily. In order that they would understand why pictures were taken during services I spoke to the men informally after the services.

Mr. Otto Belcher, Manager of the Weslaco Labor Camp, was contacted several days ago but no meeting was arranged at that time with the workers because this is a Federal-Municipal project and I had been told to leave this type of camp setup until later. The reason for my visit was because I was informed that religious services were already being held here and I wanted to obtain information and check on the attendance of the workers at these services. The arrangements here were made by the local parish priests, Father F. A. Kilday and Father Hugo Banden Bussche, in response to the letter sent out by Bishop Mariano S. Garriga, D. D., LL.D., of Corpus Christi, about the cooperation and interest they were to take in contacting the "braceros" (Copies of this letter from the Bishop are attached). In various parishes the priests have responded very favorably to the suggestions made by Bishop Garriga and the information given them from this office and contacts are being made with the "braceros" by the priests where they are not being housed in Central Housing Units.

June 18 - Contacts were made in McCook and in the Rio Grande City areas. There is no Central Housing Unit at McCook and I was informed that the workers are brought in to religious services by their employers and that they are welcomed at these services. Father V. Herbert Howley stated that he will continue to stress the cooperation of the members of his church in bringing these workers to services.

At Rio Grande City two Central Housing Units were visited, La Casita Farms and the Starr County Bracero Center. There are less than 20 men at La Casita and no more are expected until Fall. The braceros for the cotton season will not

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arrive at the Bracero Center until the first week in July. All arrangements have been made so that the workers can be contacted upon their arrival and if they accept the offer of having religious services for them, these services will be held the first week they come in.

A meeting of the Catholic Action group was attended, with Mr. Shock's knowledge and consent, so that I could give the members a general explanation of this program. This group, headed by Mr. Ramon de la Garza, has shown a definite interest in the program of providing religious facilities and services for the "braceros". One or two members of this organization have accompanied the priests from Mission when they go out to the various Central Housing Units and also extend an invitation to the workers in the name of the local parishioners. At this meeting were present several merchants, truckers and ladies of the church besides the regular members. The purpose of this meeting was to find out how they can work without interfering with our program. After giving them an explanation of our program I suggested to them to limit their activities to purely social and charitable activity for the "bracero", particularly when these "braceros" are in the hospitals and in jail. Mr. de la Garza called upon all present to cooperate in the program of making the "bracero" welcome at the local church and in town.

June 19 - No contact has been made with Rev. O. Adkins in regard to the holding of religious services at the West Side Farm Labor Association camp north of Pharr. Individual employers and associations that have men housed at Central Housing Units were contacted today by phone, as a matter of courtesy, to explain our program and to request their cooperation and permission to talk to the workers contracted to them. No employer contacted to this date has expressed anything but complete agreement and offered cooperation in carrying out this program.

June 20 - Contacted Father J. P. Delaney to check on the outcome on the second services held in the Mission area and which I did not attend. Father Delaney reports that attendance is very satisfactory. The first religious services were held at the Valley Farmers Co-op Harvesting Society with Mr. W. Wallace, Sr. and Mr. Hugh Cupps present. This association only had about 50 workers under contract this week and 46 of them were present for the services. The turnout seemed to impress Mr. Wallace and Mr. Cupps and the short sermon given by Father Edward Blown to the men was translated and heartily approved by both men. No permanent altar has been fixed at this camp and their plan calls for a portable altar that can be installed in an open area suitable for the comfort and large attendance of the workers. Father Blown was given an explanation of the type of altar that was planned and he approved the idea. No building is large enough to hold the number of men that will be living at some of these camps and the weather does not permit a large concentration in a small place. All priests contacted have approved arranging services in the open.

June 21 - Eight associations were contacted today and arrangements made so that their contracted workers can be interviewed in regard to religious services at their camps. Mr. C. M. Joyce, Manager of Progreso Harvesting Association, commented, "When you get in touch with Uncle Sam tell him that if he ever had a good idea on this program, this is it."

June 27, 1956

June 22 - Continued making contacts by phone with associations that have not been contacted personally.

General: Many of the associations that have been contacted have approved the program of religious services for their men whether they are to furnish the Central Housing or in cases where they are housing the workers at large labor Camps. However, most of the associations do not have workers now under contract and do not expect them until the end of June or the first part of July.

All arrangements are being made to have the approval of all associations so that the meetings with the workers can be held as soon as they arrive at the various Central Housing Units and upon getting their approval the religious services can be started immediately. A resume of the number of services being held and the approximate attendance will be turned in the first week in July.

TO: Mr. W.B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

July 17, 1956

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area #5

RE: Weekly report of Survey on Bracero Community Activities

July 8 - A visit was made today to the evening Mass being said at the Weslaco Bracero Center by Father Jose Maria Farias. After the Service a call was made on Father Kilday and he reported that the new Mexican priest had been actively looking for concentrations of braceros within the city limits of Weslaco. He walked all over town checking and looking, and had remarkable success. It is estimated that approximately 2,000 braceros were located and the two priests plan to work among these workers, too. Father Kilday suggested that I visit Bishop Garriga in order to give him a report on what is being done; the cooperation obtained from the Association Managers and individual employers; the effort made and the success obtained by the priests in the Valley in attending to the workers at the various camps; the acceptance by the workers and their attendance at the religious services being held for them. No visit is planned to Bishop Garriga until the whole Valley has been checked and results can be reported over the results of the whole program.

July 9 - Two camps were contacted for meetings with the workers to ascertain whether they were agreeable to the holding of religious services at their respective camps. A remarkable part of this program is the attentiveness of the workers when I am giving them an explanation of the program to bring them religious services, when it is explained to them that they are the ones to decide whether they want these services and that they are to determine the services to be held. Having to explain in detail to these men about their rights and privileges as well as their responsibilities they appear interested and become, at times, very interested when they are told that these services are to be of their choice and at an hour that will not interfere with their work. Frequently the meetings end with applause. Many of these workers being contacted have never been given an opportunity to say whether they would like to have services or what kind of services they would like to have; many of the workers do not go either to West Texas or up North and this program is a new and an acceptable idea. Such has been the case to date. No worker

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has **resented** the offer or given any objection to this program. On several occasions I have asked the gathered workers that go North if they have had these facilities offered them up there and in very, very few cases they have **told me** about the priests that come from Mexico to accompany the contracted workers, particularly in the state of Michigan.

The meetings with the workers have to be held at night, upon their return from work. In most cases it is only possible to contact two or three camps in one night. This is due to the fact that it is my plan to have a sufficiently representative number of the workers present not only so that they can understand what the program is about but so that they may have the opportunity to express their opinion. On several occasions I have arrived when the workers are already in bed and even then they have listened courteously and accepted our offer readily.

July 10 - Contacts were made with several Camp Managers and Association Managers to check on whether their workers had arrived. Contact had been made with these Managers previously to discuss their willingness to accept the program and to have meetings with their workers upon their arrival. Having promised to contact them again before holding the meeting with the workers I follow through to keep them informed about the date I am to hold the meetings. Three camps were visited today and meetings held with about 700 workers (Carmen Gin Camp, La Paloma & Santa Maria). Mr. J. T. Nickel, Manager of the Santa Maria Gin, requested that upon finding out what the men wanted that the priest or minister that comes out to his workers get in touch with him for the purpose of getting acquainted with him.

Two of the Associations contacted today do not have workers yet and a couple of the others, where meetings were held, are expecting more workers.

July 11 - Eleven Associations were contacted today to find out which had Central Housing and how many of those that did have Central Housing had received their workers. Workers expected at the Cameron County Bracero Center, Inc., did not arrive and the meeting planned for tonight was postponed until tomorrow night.

About 350 workers were being addressed about the time several trucks came in with new men at the Harlingen Labor Camp. About 1,000 men are expected at this camp and this number could possibly be present for the first service to be held on Friday night. This meeting was held after contacting Mr. Vic Trammell, Manager of the Harlingen Farmers Association, and Mr. C. R. Laffoon, Manager of the Labor Camp. Both of these men have been cooperative.

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July 12 - In contacting the Managers of the Palmetal Farmers Co-op Society I was introduced to Mr. S.E. Thompson, one of the partners in the Palmetal Gin and a member of the association. As he was the only person in authority present I proceeded to explain the purpose of my visit. It turned out that Mr. Thompson was not altogether in agreement with the program insofar as the participation of the government in religious affairs was concerned. Expressing himself as a "Missionary-minded Baptist" he stated that he thought the men should have religious services but just did not care for the government to tell him what to do about such things. I was told about the evils and progress the government has made in encroaching on business and citizens and that this program was involving the expenditures of large sums of money and the using of a great number of government employees. Mr. Thompson finally asked how long this had been going on, as he had heard nothing about the program. In careful language and in as clear a manner as I was capable of doing I proceeded to give explanation to all the doubts expressed by Mr. Thompson and to give him an explanation of the program, particularly about the number of men involved in this program. I told Mr. Thompson that the government was actually giving an official nudge to the employers and associations to take an interest in the religious welfare of the contracted Mexican Nationals; that the program was absolutely voluntary from the first person contacted to the last; that the services to be held at these camps were to be the preference indicated by the workers themselves and not by anyone else. Again Mr. Thompson expressed himself in agreement with the idea but not with the participation of the government. About this time the Manager of the Association came in and I was introduced to Mr. W.C. Anderson. Mr. Anderson was told by Mr. Thompson the purpose of my visit and he stated that he has informally discussed this program with Mr. J.T. James, USES Representative, and was agreeable to the holding of a meeting with the workers to determine whether they would accept religious services at their camp.

This has been the first criticism encountered in carrying out this program. Such criticism was anticipated but was met so unexpectedly that at first I did not know what I should do. I realize that Mr. Thompson was expressing a strongly held opinion and he covered a number of subjects not involved with the purpose of my visit. I made every effort to leave a clear and proper picture of what is being done and the reasons for such a program with the idea that our participation is not to force anyone into any kind of program that is not acceptable to them for whatever reason they may have. In line with this I have hesitated to ask the managers contacted to go to any expense to build any kind of altars or special places for the holding of services so that they will not feel that they are being asked or required to make additional expenditures of money to put the program in force, in particular when they do not

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wholly approve of the program. In many of the interviews held with the managers of associations I have been told that this program is so acceptable to them because they have felt a need for something like this; several managers were planning on contacting the local priest to invite him to visit their camps. The managers and employers, because they did not develop such a program, now accept the interest shown by the U.S. Department of Labor and have, in the great majority, accepted the voluntary basis on which the whole program is being established. Most of the managers realize that when the preference of the workers is going to be involved they will profess to be Catholic, this is accepted too, and they hope that their participation in the religious services will result in benefit to all concerned.

The parish priest of Rio Hondo, Father John Ofic, was contacted to check on what days he would be available for services in his area. This was done on the basis of previous experience where the workers have expressed themselves as members of the Catholic faith in overwhelming majorities and in order to know what dates to set in case services are acceptable to the workers to be contacted in this area. Another plan is to have a representative of the association present at all future meetings with the workers so that that person can make a direct report to the association about the result of the meeting with their workers.

Three more Associations were contacted on the road back to San Benito. At the Cross Roads Gin I had an interview with the Manager of the Cross Roads Farmers Co-op Society, Mr. A.C. Sponsler. Mr. Sponsler also objected in principle to the participation of the government in affairs pertaining to religion. The program was explained further to Mr. Sponsler and he stated emphatically that he would not permit a Catholic priest to come to his camp to hold services although he would not object to the workers going in to town to attend services on Sunday. He stated that he would have the minister of his church arrange some kind of service for his workers. I explained to him that our plan was based on a purely voluntary basis for all concerned and then he said that he be given a few days to think it over.

The 250 workers that arrived today at the Cameron County Bracero Center, Inc., were contacted in the company of Ramiro Ramirez, Assistant to the Camp Manager, Mr. Kennedy.

July 13 - A visit was made to Father Donald Haile, Assistant Pastor at St. Benedict's, to inform him that the meeting held last night resulted in the men requesting Catholic services at their camp. Father Haile stated that he would arrange services for these workers starting this week.

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The workers had not arrived at the Los Indios Harvesting Association camp so I returned to McAllen.

During my absence the manager of the Three Mile Farmers Co-op Association had phoned to report that the First Baptist Church in Mission had scheduled two services a week at his camp. I talked to Mr. Wilkins, the manager of Three Mile Farmers Co-op Association, and informed him that he was the only person who could determine the number of services to be held at his camp, that our interest was limited to the holding of religious services for the contracted workers, preferably one of their choice.

A visit was also made to the office by Rev. Anders, Baptist Minister living at the Weslaco Labor Camp, who came in to check on the program being carried out by the U.S. Department of Labor. Mr. T.H. Shock, Area 5 Supervisor, explained the program to Rev. Anders and he was told that I would call him later in the week.

All services now being given for the benefit of the contracted Mexican Nationals are being well attended. It is apparent that the Catholic Church had not actively participated in contacting the braceros in the past. On the other hand the overwhelming majority of the braceros profess to be Catholics and have expressed their appreciation and satisfaction in having the facilities extended to them to attend the services of their faith. The priests in the Valley have responded whole-heartedly and have obtained very satisfactory results for their efforts. However, the success obtained by one denomination will arouse the competitive spirit and interest of other denominations, particularly so if the success of the one affects the attendance at the services of the other. Every effort is being made to treat the presence of the bracero in such a manner that they will be permitted normal continuance in the practice of the faith they profess. It would be lamentable to have the labor camps be used as arenas for competition among denominations or as revival camps during the time the braceros are living in them. Every effort will be used to avoid such difficulties or to solve them when they appear.

TO: Mr. W.B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

July 18, 1956

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area #5

RE: Report on the number of braceros that are provided with religious services at their Central Housing - July 14, 1956.

Akin Labor Camp - Mission		242
Three Mile Farmers Co-op Society	242	
Carmen Gin Association - San Pedro *		500
Edinburg Bracero Center, Inc.		1,025
Fernandez Farm - Progreso		45
Weslaco Harv. Ass'n.	45	
M. & H. Farmers Co-op Society*		130
McAllen Farmers Co-op Harv. Ass'n		100
Mission Farmers Co-op Society *		202
Harlingen Labor Camp		1,000
Briggs - Coleman Co-op	500	
Harlingen Farmers Ass'n	500	
Progreso Harvesting Ass'n **		300
Santa Maria Harvesting Ass'n *		252
La Paloma	50	
Santa Maria	202	
Southwest Farmers Co-op Ass'n *		750
Three Mile Farmers Co-op Society *		341
Valley Farmers Co-op Harv. Ass'n		1,350
Weslaco Bracero Center, Inc. *		615
Rio Grande Farmers Harv. Society	325	
Donna Farmers Co-op Society	150	
Alamo-Donna Farmers Co-op Society	140	
Weslaco Labor Camp *		700
Cameron County Bracero Center, Inc. *		700
Palmetal Farmers Co-op Society	200	
Rio Grande Farmers Harv. Ass'n	500	
West Side Farm Labor Ass'n		1,259
Camp # 2 - Pharr (South)	200	
Sharyland Road	130	
Rio Vista Cotton Growers Ass'n	929	
Weslaco Harvesting Ass'n		200
		<hr/> 9,711

* Expecting more workers

** About 300 workers in vicinity of place where services are being held.

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Note: Priests at Weslaco are contacting over 1,000 braceros in the city and surrounding areas that are not living at Central Housing Units.

A special Mass for braceros is given at 10:30 A.M. on Sundays at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church with attendance reported at over 500. (Mission, Texas).

Priests at La Feria, Mercedes, Donna, Alamo, Edinburg and McAllen report attendance at their services by braceros. Supposedly these workers are being housed at individual farms. No exact data is available.

All camp managers contacted have reported satisfaction with the progress and effects of the program.

TO: Mr. W.B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

July 31, 1956

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

RE: Weekly report of survey of Bracero Community Activities

July 23 - Rev. James Russell, Baptist Minister, living at Donna, Texas came to the McAllen Area office to contact me. Rev. Russell had been told by the manager of the Weslaco Bracero Center, Mr. Jack Myers, that he would have to clear through me for the holding of religious services at this camp. This erroneous instruction by Mr. Myers had already been discussed and cleared with him and I had just been waiting for a call from Rev. Russell to explain our position on this matter.

I had the opportunity to convince Rev. Russell that we were not in a position of controlling or limiting the kind or number of services that would be held for braceros, that the managers of camps or individual employers were to use their discretion in this matter. However, Rev. Russell did agree with me that the number of religious services should be held down to a minimum so that workers would not grow to resent them.

Rev. Russell uses a portable sound system and on the last visit he had made to the Weslaco Bracero Center he had parked his car and was holding his services near the sleeping quarters of the workers. During these services some of the workers kept turning out the lights and began shouting so that the services were brought to an end and under these circumstances the Camp Manager informed Rev. Russell to contact me. Rev. Russell was told that we were only contacting the camps to find out if the men wanted religious services and, if so, what services they would prefer. Taking this into consideration other services taken to the men would be at the instigation of the person giving the services and not at the request of the workers.

In order to avoid future difficulties with the men, Rev. Russell stated that he would hold his services once a week at this camp, after making the necessary arrangements with Mr. Myers, and that the services would be held in an area where the workers not participating in the services would not be disturbed.

Rev. Russell reported that on the three services he had held at this camp he had had the following number of workers present: first Service - 7; second Service - 24; third Service - 12.

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No other contact has been made with Protestant Ministers although Protestant services are being held at various camps. However, these services are of a purely missionary nature and the workers have been told repeatedly that they are free to attend or to remain away from any religious service not of their choice. Whenever a group of workers does request the services of a Protestant Minister I shall make the necessary contact and arrangements. Otherwise it is thought unnecessary to contact a given Minister or group of Ministers and to get them interested in going out to the workers when the workers have not expressed a desire to have their services.

Contact was made with the proper authorities of the Hargill Co-op. Association and arrangements made so that one of their representatives be present at the meeting to be held with their workers. Mr. Eldon Longwell, Field Man, accompanied me to the two housing units where the meetings were held. After these meetings were over Mr. Longwell asked me if he could bring his 30 workers in to town on the nights that the services would be held. He was told that the whole matter rested with him as I was not trying to force anyone to attend nor to deny anyone the privilege of attending.

July 24 - a new camp was reported in the vicinity of Alamo and permission was obtained from their employer to contact the workers. There were 60 men living in an old tourist court and they readily accepted the idea of holding services at their camp.

Last night I was to have met the representative of the Rio Farms so that he could accompany me to the meeting with the workers. I was unable to make contact and so the meeting was postponed for tonight. All the workers had been gathered at one barrack and were waiting for me when I arrived. Usually my talk to the workers does not last over 10 minutes but in most cases it is necessary to remain afterwards to answer their questions. At this particular meeting I met several of the workers that had already been at other camps where religious services were being held and they came forward to say 'hello.' Mr. Juan Luera, Field man for Rio Farms, accompanied me at this meeting.

The 150 workers contracted to Dry Lands Farmers Co-op. Society were contacted in the company of Mr. Arturo Garza, trucker for this Ass'n. Some of the workers had already gone to bed by the time I arrived but did not seem to mind as they were not detained too long.

July 25 - Father Camilo Garcia, Alamo, was contacted to find out if the new camp was in his parish. The new camp is in the Donna parish and contact was made with Father Walter Schlossner to inform him about the acceptance of the workers that he go out to hold services for them. Father Garcia informed me that he was making contact with the workers in his parish and had found a group that he was now visiting. Both Father Garcia and Father Schlossner reported that many of the workers are attending church services in their respective churches.

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Some 140 workers finally arrived at the Starr County Bracero Center and a meeting held at this camp. Most of these workers are in the U.S. for the first time and they were very pleased to have religious services offered to them. When I asked how many workers were not Catholic one man raised his hand. Upon being asked to what church he belonged he answered that he was a "libre." Further questioning resulted in that he believed in "nothing".

Few religious services have been visited or spot-checked lately because of the meetings at the new places. The reports obtained from the priests holding these services are the only source of information I have on the progress being made.

July 26 - The area papers have announced that the peak has been reached in the contracting of Mexican Nationals and that the cotton picking season has passed the mid-point. Taking into consideration that already the braceros are beginning to abandon their jobs and that the managers of Central Housing units are beginning to encounter some difficulty in getting the workers to finish out their contracts it was thought best to make a survey of the Raymondville area, which has not been worked yet on this program, to determine whether much could be gained by going into that territory to organize and arrange for the holding of religious services at this late date in the cotton picking season.

The first hurricane of the season is also bringing many showers to scattered regions within the Valley and strikes by the workers or abandonment of work is expected on the basis of the experience in past years under similar circumstances. To contact employers at this particular time could easily offset the satisfactory results obtained at the beginning of the program.

Contact was made with Father Stanley Gucik, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Raymondville, and he stated that there are only two priests assigned for the whole of Willacy County for the Spanish-speaking Catholics. He stated that the local papers had reported that some 20,000 workers were in Willacy County and that he estimated that contact was being made with 10% of these workers. In explaining our program and asking for opinions and information, Father Gucik stated that he thought it would be impossible to give services at many of the camps within their parish on account of the great distances and the amount of work they already have.

Father John Ofic, Rio Hondo, also stated that he would be unable to go to all the camps within his parish. Father Ofic has done much work in contacting the workers on Sundays and Saturdays at the various places where the workers congregate to make their week-end

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purchases and has distributed reading material and invited them to attend services at the Rio Hondo Church.

July 27 - Father L. Lanning, Port Isabel, is on vacation and the priest replacing him, Father J. R. Foelker, does not speak Spanish. Father Foelker, however, promised to contact a Spanish-speaking priest from Brownsville in case one is necessary. Much of the success obtained in the program has been due to the interest taken in contacting the workers and talking to them when met on the road or on the street by the local parish priests.

Association managers and truckers contacted are all of the opinion that the cotton picking season ~~is~~ about over, to last no more than two weeks. This time limit would not permit complete coverage of all the camps in the area, and the amount of good that could be done might be overlooked in the activities of the last days of the season by both the employers and the workers. Should the same program be desired for next season, this region of Raymondville could be worked first, right at the beginning of the season.

I have made every effort to keep this program completely apart from any other activity of the other USES Representatives in the field so that the employers and the workers may be in a position to evaluate it in a detached manner and accept the religious services at the Central Housing units as a standard operating procedure even though the Department of Labor does not actively promote this type of work in the future. However, as I present myself at meetings as a representative of the U.S. Department of Labor it may give occasion for the workers to use my presence for the discussion of problems pertaining to their real or imaginary complaints as the cotton picking season draws to a close.

On the basis of the information gathered, I draw the conclusion that it would be advisable to terminate this special detail for this season at this time.

Your instructions are respectfully requested.

July 24, 1956

TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

SUBJECT: Weekly report of Survey of Bracero Community Activities.

July 16 - Several Association Managers were contacted to set dates for the meetings with their workers and several priests were called to check on the progress of the religious services already being held.

Father James Patrick Delaney continues to report very satisfactory attendance at the camps (5) within his parish limits. On Sunday (July 15) a special Mass was said for the benefit of the braceros in that parish. The efforts of the parishioners, truckers and employers resulted in a full church for this service, well over 500 workers. At this service the workers were again invited to come to services in town on Sundays. Very good cooperation is obtained by Father Delaney from his parishioners and good results are being obtained in contacting the workers in that area. It is significant that the priests going to these camps to give the religious services, besides performing the services, are enjoying the experience and getting much pleasure from their contacts with the workers.

Father Sebastian Mozos, Harlingen, upon being contacted for a report on how things were getting on stated that he had not gotten on too well. Further inquiry revealed that he had had to climb upon a truck in order to be able to be heard by the large number of workers that came to his services. He explained that he would correct this by taking a loud-speaker with him the next time. He seemed impressed with the turnout and he promises to continue the services throughout the time the workers are at the Harlingen Labor Camp.

Father V. DuBussion, Edinburg, Father E. Blown, Edcouch and Father Javier Robles, Pharr, all report excellent cooperation from the camp authorities and good attendance by the workers. The two Spanish-speaking priests at Weslaco (Father Marcos Martinez from San Luis Potosi and Father Jose Maria Farias from Michoacan) are diligently working among the workers in that area and have made many contacts with workers living in town or in small camps. In any group large enough to merit the holding of religious services the workers are given these services. Father Farias reports that at one camp where he went at 5:00 in the morning, 35 of the 70 workers received Holy Communion. Many of the workers are reported going in to services in town and several priests have reported an increase in attendance at Sunday services and in the number of workers that are going to Confession and Communion. This holds true, also, at the two Labor Camps at Weslaco.

Very few non-Catholics have been found at the meetings held at the time the workers are given an opportunity to express their acceptance of the religious services. The largest number found were four (4) workers at the Edinburg Bracero Center, Inc. Camp. Two of these men professed to be Witnesses of Jehovah and two (2) professed to be Seventh Day Adventists. Two workers who professed to be non-Catholic at the Weslaco Bracero Center Camp stated that they were Evangelists but could not tell me the name of their Church.

On the other hand, the workers who profess to be "believers" or Catholics are sometimes uncertain about whether the priest who is coming out to hold services for them is really a "Roman Catholic priest." This may be due to subtle propaganda or to the fact that representatives of other religions may have presented themselves as "priests." This same question has been asked at no less than six camps so the doubt seems to be general. After the services, where the priest has not worn a cassock or surplice, one or two of the workers have approached me with the same question. I have advised all the priests about this and they have stated that they will do all within their power to eliminate this doubt from the workers' minds.

Father Delaney brought out the point that the number of workers attending services at any given camp does not change too much from week to week, only in the case where movement of personnel has taken place. When no movements have taken place the same number of workers seem to take advantage of the services being held for them.

July 17 - At the request of Father Kilday I went to Weslaco for an interview, and to meet the new Mexican priest, Father Marcos Martinez from San Luis Potosi. The presence of Father Martinez and Father Farias in Weslaco is a great advantage in this work. Several more Mexican priests in the Valley during the cotton picking season would relieve the parish priests from the added detail of the extra services being given for the contracted Mexican Nationals. Mexican priests could dedicate themselves altogether to the religious services and welfare of the workers.

Father Kilday wanted to inform me about the progress made and the work being carried out by his two assistants. He also reported that a Minister who went to hold services at the camp had not been accepted by the workers and had been told to leave. Later I called at the residence of Rev. Anders, Baptist Minister living at the Weslaco Labor Camp, to find out more about this incident. Rev. Anders was not home and although I called two more times I was unable to find him. In checking with the camp manager, Mr. Jack Myers, I was informed that the Minister had arrived in his car and had set up a loud speaker in the area where the workers sleep. These services are held at the discretion of the missionary and at times without first contacting the managers of the camps. Although the workers may get more than their share of religious services, without requesting them, than any other similar group in this area, I strongly impressed it upon Father Farias to tell the workers who come to his services that they must, under all circumstances, show respect. Rev. James Russell, the Minister involved, was told to contact me and I am waiting for his call as I do not have his address.

Father Kilday also reported that Sunday Masses are being said at both Labor Camps at 5:00 A.M. at the Weslaco Bracero Center and at 6:30 A.M. at the Weslaco Labor Camp.

July 18 - Several priests, during our first interview, have expressed their interest in why the Government would go into this program for the benefit of the contracted workers, implying that the Spanish-speaking citizen is placed at a disadvantage by the whole Bracero Program. I have made it a point to explain the necessity for braceros in the harvesting of crops in the Valley and in all points where they are taken due to the lack of sufficient native

hands. The pamphlet that is left at each parish is called to their attention so that they can see under what circumstances and under what provisions these workers are permitted entry into the United States. It is evident that the priests show a legitimate concern for the members of their congregation who are Spanish speaking and that they are not too familiar with the many problems involved in the bracero program. My main point in explaining this program is that in this particular phase we are only concerned with the workers insofar as their spiritual welfare is concerned; other problems will continue to be studied and discussed in an effort to arrive at a solution. I firmly believe that the priests who have been called upon to take part in the services being held for contracted Mexican Nationals are getting an altogether new viewpoint about the bracero program; if not, at least a new approach to the merits and possibilities on the basis of their experience in the work they are now performing. My point is that the braceros are to be approached by the priests or ministers as members of their church and not as "braceros."

July 19 - Many of the contacts made with Association Managers to obtain their consent for the holding of religious services at their respective camps have been changed because they did not get the workers or because other housing arrangements were made at a later date.

As stated in last week's report, I made the call promised to Mr. A. C. Sponsler, Manager of the Crossroads Farmers Cooperative Society. At our first meeting Mr. Sponsler had not readily agreed to permit services at his camp and finally requested a few days to think it over. Today Mr. Sponsler was courteous and agreeable to the holding of services at his camp after I contacted the workers to find out their opinion on this subject. Mr. Sponsler was invited to accompany me at the time I hold the meeting and he readily accepted.

July 20 - On the basis of a report that the services set up at Carmen Gin Association Camp were not being held I went to San Pedro to visit Father Michael Moore. Father Moore had visited the camp and invited several of the workers to spread the word among the other workers that services would be held for them at a church about one-quarter of a mile from their camp on the following Sunday. Not one of the workers showed up and Father Moore was deeply hurt, drawing the conclusion that the men were not interested in religious services. I explained to Father Moore that it was first necessary for him to visit the workers at their camp and to hold services there for them. This has been the procedure at all other camps and much success has been obtained.

At all camps where services are to be held I have tried to be present at the first service in case any problem should arise. Unfortunately I was unable to go to the Carmen Camp at which time I could have readily discussed the problem with Father Moore and avoided this misunderstanding on his part. Everything was arranged for services to be given on Wednesday, July 25, 1956.

Three hundred and fifty (350) workers were contacted at the Central Housing Unit maintained by the Los Indios Harvesting Association at Carrizitos.

July 22 - A visit was made today to the parish church at Mission to check

on the attendance at the service by braceros on Sundays. Over half of the church was filled with contracted Mexican Nationals. Inquiry revealed that large numbers had attended the earlier services. Around 300 workers were present at the 10:30 Mass.

One employer reported that newly contracted workers had come to him to request permission to make arrangements to get taxis on Sunday mornings so that they could go to church services. He took them in himself and upon returning to their camp the men went out and worked half a day to show their appreciation for the favor extended them.

Religion

August 20, 1956

TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

RE: Final activity report of Survey of Bracero Community Activities.

THE PROGRAM OUTLINED.

On May 28, 1956, Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional Farm Placement Representative, outlined a program which was to be developed and carried out in the Rio Grande Valley by the U. S. Department of Labor for the furthering of the religious welfare of the contracted Mexican Nationals. Organization and presentation of this program was begun at McAllen, Texas on June 1, 1956. Details of this program were further outlined in a letter from Mr. McFarland to Mr. Ed McDonald, Regional Director, in a letter dated May 29, 1956.

Preventive work was to be undertaken in line with the provisions of Article 23 (Protection from Immoral and Illegal Influences) of the Work Contract, as amended. The Association managers were to be contacted in an effort to arouse their interest in the program of holding religious services for their contracted Mexican Nationals. No attempt was being made to "request or require" that the Associations accept this program or to carry out the suggestions made to them. The first step was to discuss the advisability and need for religious services for the contracted workers together with the possible benefits that could be derived for the workers themselves, the Associations and the community in general. If the Association managers accepted such an idea and would cooperate in such a program the U. S. Department of Labor would assist in the arranging for such services by contacting the proper parties, as determined by the workers themselves. Above all, particular emphasis was given to the voluntary character of the program as a whole; not only were the Association managers to freely accept or reject the program but the workers themselves were to have an opportunity to accept or reject the offer to hold services for them at their respective camps, and if acceptable to them, they were also to choose the type of services to be held.

THE PROGRAM ORGANIZED.

Information about the Associations operating in the Rio Grande Valley had to be gathered and organized. It was necessary to obtain data about the proper person to see in regards to the program to be undertaken; to find out if the Association was using Central Housing Units for its contracted Mexican Nationals; where the Central Housing Units were located. Some Central Housing Units were being used by various associations and in these cases each Association manager was contacted as well as the manager of the camp before any further steps were taken.

Taking into consideration that a large majority of the contracted Mexican Nationals are baptized Catholics, contacts were made with local parish priests to determine parish limits and the number of priests that would be available to carry on the program in case it were acceptable to the Associations and to

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the workers. A letter from Bishop Mariano Garriga to the priests of parishes with Spanish-speaking congregations was sent out to ask that these priests cooperate in this program.

Over 75 individual Association managers and individual employers of contracted Mexican Nationals were contacted in the development of this program. This USES representative was received and treated with courtesy by all persons contacted. In only two cases was criticism encountered. This criticism was not to the idea of the program but to the participation of a government agency in what they considered "a religious program." In neither of the two cases was the criticism serious enough to have them deny the carrying out of the program with their consent to hold religious services at their respective camps and of holding meetings with their contracted workers to determine if they wanted these services and, if so, what kind.

Under the circumstances that this program constituted a new approach and as a preventive measure to carry out the provisions of the Work Contract, as amended, it was received with interest and in many cases the cooperation offered was much greater than had been anticipated. Many of the persons contacted had either given such an idea some thought or had planned to take steps on their own. The steps taken by the U. S. Department of Labor in bringing this need to their attention and the offer of assistance in the development of a program was, in most cases, highly acceptable.

Once the managers had accepted the idea and offered their cooperation in this program they were asked to grant permission for the holding of meetings with their contracted workers to explain the program to them. One of the methods found to be advisable in holding these meetings with the workers was to have a representative of the manager, or the manager himself, present at the time the workers were asked whether they accepted the program and what type of services they would prefer. In this manner there would be no room for doubt about the participation of the U. S. Department of Labor being absolutely unbiased. All the managers contacted accepted the program, in most cases gave outstanding cooperation.

The meetings held with the workers were well attended, although in some cases the camp itself had not received all the workers that were to be living there. It was explained to these workers that they were being offered the opportunity to state whether it would be agreeable to them to have religious services held at their camps. Though hesitant at first they readily accepted when told that these services would not interfere with their work and would be services of their choice. They were told that they had the privilege of attending such services or of staying away, in case they did not care to attend. Particular stress was given to the responsibility they had in showing respect to priest or minister who would come to their camps even when they would not be members of the church represented by these clergymen. At no time did any of the workers show disrespect or object to the program being offered to them, quite the contrary. The workers indicated their appreciation and acceptance of this program by the number that attended services.

As stated before, the overwhelming majority of the workers are baptized Catholics and they indicated their preference for Catholic services. The

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largest number of non-Catholic workers found was at the Starr County Bracero Center where eight (8) indicated their preference for non-Catholic services. A Baptist Minister was contacted at Rio Grande City to go to this camp to hold services for these eight (8) men. At other camps one or two would indicate that they were not Catholics and it would not have been practical to notify a given Minister to go out to these camps to tend to one or two men. This step was taken in view of the fact that in providing religious services of their preference for the workers it did not imply that the missionary activities of clergymen of other religions were deprived from going out to these camps. In this way the non-Catholic workers were able to receive attention from Ministers of their faith.

The managers of the various camps were informed that they alone could place a limit to the number and type of religious services to be held at their respective camps. It was agreed that discretion was to be used in not having too many religious services that would nullify the possible effects of this program.

All the parish priests having Spanish-speaking congregations in the Valley were contacted. They offered and participated in the program to the extent that their parish duties would permit. They gained much experience and seemed to have derived a great deal of pleasure from the result of their work among the contracted Mexican Nationals. The ability of the majority of these priests to speak Spanish was a decided factor in their success. At various churches special services were arranged on Sundays for the workers and their response to these efforts was very satisfactory.

In contacting the priests they were told that their activity among the bracero was to be limited to moral and religious problems and that all braceros coming to them with complaints were to be directed to the proper persons. This was done in an effort to keep the priests from getting involved in problems that they would be unable to solve and would not jeopardize their acceptability by the employers. All contacts of priests with managers of camps or employers were evidently satisfactory as no complaint or criticism has been received.

The services held for the workers were short, not longer than an hour. These services were either very early in the morning, on Sunday, and in the evening, after 8:00 P.M. The majority of the services were held in the open to permit the workers to be more at ease as the weather conditions, as well as the buildings available, would not permit too many services indoors.

Approximately 18,000 workers were given the opportunity to attend religious services, either at the camp where they were living or in the churches in the immediate vicinity of their camps. A very large percent of these workers took advantage of these facilities and all priests contacted on this subject report an increase in attendance at Sunday services in their respective parishes.

RESULTS.

The success of the program in contacting the contracted Mexican National has aroused the interest of the priests in the Rio Grande Valley. This interest is limited only by the lack of time to contact more workers because of the

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necessity to perform other duties. However, with the aid anticipated from the Bishop of Corpus Christi for next year, much more can be accomplished. Complete satisfaction has been expressed by all priests who took part in the program.

All the Valley Area was not covered in the development of this program. Three reasons for this failure are:

1. Inexperience of this USES Representative.
2. Lack of time and incomplete data for developing program.
3. Shortage of priests for this type of work.

Much time was lost in getting organized and in gathering information. The short period required for the picking of the cotton crop in the Valley did not afford time to make contacts with all the Association managers and their contracted workers. This in part was also due to the fact that there were not enough priests to carry out the dates made for the holding of religious services.

Original contacts with the Association managers were made before the workers arrived and it was necessary to return to each place to contact the workers upon their arrival. Then too, the first services had to be attended to obtain first hand information as to their success and effectiveness and to solve whatever problem might arise. Everyone involved was inexperienced and uncertain about the outcome. By the time a system was being developed the season had reached a stage where further work was useless.

CONCLUSIONS.

The managers and employers affected accepted the program of holding religious services for their contracted Mexican Nationals. Even in cases where no Central Housing Units were being used by the Association all assistance was offered in case their workers were to be contacted in line with this program.

The workers will attend the services held for them at their camps. In all the contacts had with the workers no individual case was found where a worker, or a group of workers, had expressed objection to the program. The majority of the meetings held to present the program to the workers and to offer them the facility of religious services were met with wholehearted approval and, in many cases, with applause.

The Valley priests did a magnificent job but the shortage of priests affected the full development of the program. Areas that were not fully worked or worked at all for lack of priests were: all of Willacy County, parish of La Feria and parts of the parish of Port Isabel, Rio Hondo and Harlingen. In many cases services were cancelled on a moment's notice because of a sick call or a death in the community and the services of the priest were required elsewhere. Under these circumstances it would be best to arrange for bi-monthly services in some parishes in order to make sure that schedules could be met.

Only one priest was available in the Valley who could devote his entire time to work among the "braceros", Father Jose Maria Farias from Zamora, Michoacan. This priest was obtained by Father Kilday to work in the Weslaco parish. He had tremendous success not only because he had sufficient time to devote to

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his work but because he took such a sincere interest in his work. He took care of all the camps where arrangements were made for his services and then took it upon himself to go out among the smaller groups in the countryside and to work among those living in the city of Weslaco.

SUGGESTIONS.

The following suggestions are respectfully submitted for your information and consideration should this program be continued and the assistance of the U. S. Department of Labor be made available to carry it out:

1. The U. S. Department of Labor could continue its interest, even though not actively participating in such a program, to check on the activity of the workers and the priests. Any priest going into this type of program should be given the information that would be of aid in his work.
2. Spanish-speaking priests are vitally necessary for this program. Where no Spanish-speaking priests are available the program can encounter indifference on the part of the workers.
3. Additional priests should be obtained for complete coverage of the Valley area; these priests should be able to cover larger areas than are included in local parishes; permission should be given all the priests to hold evening Masses so that the workers can be given complete facilities in the practice of their religion.
4. The courteous treatment given by the employers and Association managers can be maintained on their present level by the activities of the priests. At this time the relationship has been very satisfactory and can be kept that way easily.
5. The employers were not requested to make additional expenses in setting up the program of holding religious services at their camps. Wherever and whenever special arrangements have to be made in regards to location, light facilities, etc., the attention of the employer or manager can be called to that particular need. This practice has been followed with excellent results.
6. Above all the program should be developed carefully and not too rapidly to avoid the charge of "pressure" being used to carry out our suggestions.

On the basis of the information now available and on the experience gained in the Rio Grande Valley in carrying out this program the need for priests, for continuance of this program, is as follows:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Mission | 2. Pharr | 3. Weslaco |
| | San Juan | Progreso |
| 4. La Feria | Alamo | Mercedes |
| Santa Rosa | Donna | |
| Santa Maria | | |
| 7. Harlingen | 5. Los Indios | 6. San Benito |
| Primera | La Paloma | Barreda |
| Combes | Rangerville | Olmito |
| | San Pedro | Los Fresnos |

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8. Rio Hondo
Bayview
Porfirio
Santa Monica

9. San Perlita
Willamar
Raymondville
Lyford
Sebastian

10. La Sara
Hargill
Monte Alto
La Villa
Edcouch-Elsa
La Blanca

11. San Manuel
Linn
Edinburg
Monte Cristo

Using the number of "braceros" that were contracted for the cotton picking season of 1956 and their distribution throughout the Valley the cities of Hidalgo, McAllen and Rio Grande City could adequately take care of the workers living within their parish limits. This is also true of the McCook community. Although eleven (11) priests are indicated as necessary to cover the Valley area a minimum of six (6) would give enough assistance to the priests now in the Valley to cover most of the territory. Father F. A. Kilday, Weslaco, was consulted on this matter and is in agreement with this opinion. The plans outlined by Bishop Garriga, and listed in a separate report, will cover the facilities to be given the priests from the proper church authorities about the area in which they can work and the number of services that can be given by each priest.

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TO: Mr. W. B. McFarland, Regional
Farm Placement Representative

FROM: Bernard V. Fox, USES
Field Representative, McAllen, Texas - Area # 5

RE: Report of Interview with Most Rev. Bishop Mariano Garriga,
Bishop of the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas.

In compliance with your verbal instructions, an appointment was arranged with Most Rev. Bishop Mariano Garriga, Bishop of the Diocese of Corpus Christi, through Father F. A. Kilday, Weslaco.

On August 9, 1956, the meeting was held at the Chancery Office at which time an oral report was made to Bishop Garriga of the program carried out in providing religious facilities for the contracted Mexican Nationals in the Rio Grande Valley. The meeting was very informal and opinions and impressions freely exchanged on all points brought out in the discussion. Bishop Garriga expressed deep interest in the program carried out and in the success attained in this work; satisfaction and thanks were expressed for the participation of the U. S. Department of Labor in bringing the need and advisability of holding religious services for contracted Mexican Nationals to the attention of the employers; for the facilities provided by the employers and their acceptance of the program; and particular pleasure on the manner in which the workers themselves had accepted the facilities provided, evidenced by the numbers that attended the services held for them. Several pictures taken at various services throughout the Valley, were shown the Bishop and a complete set was promised for his files. The Bishop commented on the way in which the priests were able to participate in this program and yet continue to carry their heavy load of parish duties. He was informed that all the priests contacted had given excellent cooperation in this program, in answer to his letter to them, dated May 25, 1956.

The meeting lasted well over an hour. In the course of the conversation inquiry was made as to whether this USES Representative had made any direct report or had contacted Archbishop Lucey throughout this program. The Bishop was told that the only contact had with Archbishop Lucey had been through a visit made to the Valley by his secretary, Father W. D. O'Connor, who had checked on the program and had left apparently satisfied with the information given him and the results being obtained. This information seemed to satisfy Bishop Garriga very much.

After covering the program generally and the results attained a discussion was held on the shortcomings encountered. Bishop Garriga was told that the only limiting factor was the shortage of priests in the Rio Grande Valley; retreats held at a time when the priests were needed for the contacting of the workers and the absence of priests from their parishes on vacations at a time when their presence was required. Bishop Garriga stated that several good ideas had been brought to his attention in the course of this discussion and that he planned to take action right away on preparing for the cotton season of 1957. He stated that he plans to obtain Spanish-speaking priests to devote their entire time to work in this type of program for future cotton seasons. He

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further stated that he would try to obtain these additional priests from the interior of Mexico; that he would make an effort to obtain young and active priests, fully aware of their responsibility and interested in the work they will be called on to perform. These priests will be authorized to hold the number of services necessary, including evening Masses; they will be authorized to officiate throughout the diocese without limitations of parish boundaries; assistance will be given them by the local parish priests.

At the end of the discussion the Bishop requested that I give him a list of the priests required for the Valley in a program such as the one carried out this year. Permission was requested for this USES Representative to discuss and seek the advice of Father Kilday on this matter and the suggestion was accepted by Bishop Garriga. In the final report of this program the information requested by Bishop Garriga will be included and available for you to forward as you deem necessary.

One final suggestion was made to Bishop Garriga, which he accepted. Religious material can be distributed among the contracted Mexican Nationals with great benefits, particularly reading material.

Father Jose Maria Farias, Zamora, Michoacan, who worked in Father Kilday's parish with outstanding results, provided the enclosed pictures. Smaller copies have been ordered. These pictures indicate the type of reception and acceptance given by the workers to services held at their camps, indoors and outdoors and at the local churches.